# Israeli Ambassador: Obama, Not Trump, is the One Being ‘Outrageous’

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# <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/12/ron-dermer-israel-united-nations-donald-trump-barack-obama-233027>

The White House’s decision not to block a United Nations Security Council resolution condemning Israel for its construction of settlements in occupied territories was “outrageous,” Israeli Ambassador Ron Dermer said Thursday morning, especially given impending transfer of power in Washington.

Dermer told MSNBC’s “Morning Joe” that he had personally lobbied the administration of President Barack Obama not to abstain from the Security Council vote and that he had warned senior administration officials that if they proceeded with their plan, Israel would be compelled to appeal to President-elect Donald Trump.

The Obama administration opted to abstain from the Security Council vote, breaking with a long tradition of using the U.S. veto power to protect Israel. Trump quickly weighed in on Twitter, announcing on Christmas Eve that “the big loss yesterday for Israel in the United Nations will make it much harder to negotiate peace. Too bad, but we will get it done anyway!” He chimed in again Wednesday that “we cannot continue to let Israel be treated with such total disdain and disrespect” and urged Israel to “stay strong” because his inauguration “is fast approaching!”

“I know a lot of the talk in the press for the first few days was how outrageous it was for a president-elect to weigh in and to breach this policy of one president at a time,” Dermer said Thursday morning. “But what I actually think is outrageous for an outgoing administration in the waning days of its presidency is to radically shift U.S. policy without the knowledge or the support of the incoming administration.”

The Israeli ambassador said he expects Trump’s administration to warm relations between the U.S. and Israeli governments but that “there is damage now that has been done” by the U.N. resolution. Dermer refused to offer proof that the Obama administration was behind the resolution, a claim made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Instead, Dermer said his government would provide that proof to Trump’s administration, which would then be free to make it public or not.

“The prime minister doesn't make such a charge on international television without it being based 100 percent on evidence,” he said. “So you'll have to be a little patient. Invite me back in a little while on your show.”

Dermer also seemed unfazed by Trump’s selection of David Friedman as America’s ambassador to Israel. Friedman is an Orthodox Jewish attorney who has expressed skepticism toward a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the preferred solution by multiple U.S. administrations and the stated goal of Netanyahu. Friedman is also a supporter of Israeli settlement activity, but Dermer said that it will ultimately be Trump and Netanyahu, not their ambassadors, who set policy.

“People are choosing this story to suggest that somehow his ideology is going to drive events,” Dermer said. “I don't set the policies of the government of Israel, and Mr. Friedman will not set the policies of the government of the United States. That will be set by the president and prime minister.”